FICTION

Latifa Babas, “History: When the corsairs of Salé made a British island their naval base” Yabiladi, Posted 05/31/2019.
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Under the leadership of the Dutch renegade Murad Reis, the grand admiral of the Republic of Salé, corsairs invaded a British island in 1627, which they made their base for expeditions to the North The coasts of southwest England were easy prey for Moroccan corsairs. During the 17th century, as the Republic of Salé gained power and notoriety, Moroccan pirates headed north by attacking the largest island in the Bristol Channel, England.

The corsairs of Salé thus attacked Lundy Island in 1627. The expedition was led by the Dutch renegade Jan Janszoon, also known as **Murad Reis**. Converted to Islam, he became a pirate in Salé then, **between 1624 and 1627, Grand Admiral of the Republic of Salé, which he led in this capacity**.

“*From 1625, the Turkish (Muslim) pirate ship became a common mode of transport on the western coast*”, recalls Cyril Field in “The British Navy Book” (Blackie And Son Limited Editions, 1915). **Describing the attack on Lundy Island, he writes that the Moroccan corsairs "*captured the island*" and "*threatened to burn Ilfracombe (a small British port) unless a large sum of money was paid in lieu. indemnities* ”.**

<u>Slaves from Ireland and Danish ships</u>

The island of Lundy was transformed into a base used by the corsairs of Sale to attack the surrounding areas. Once on the island, **the privateers "*continued to lead raids on the coastal towns and villages of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset*," says the Historic UK site. Murad Reis led the corsairs to Cornish County, where they arrived on a Sunday, says Cyril Field. Once there, the Moroccan pirates surrounded a church while "*the service of the mass continued and reduced to the state of slaves sixty men of the congregation*".**

From what many testimonies suggest, slavery was the main motive that led the Grand Admiral of the Republic of Salé to sail north. Having dominated the island of Lundy for five years, Jan Janszoon alias Murad Reis initiated a "*long voyage across the North Atlantic, capturing slaves from Iceland and Danish ships*".

Although he had great ambitions and **managed to sail near Iceland, Jan Janszoon and the Moroccan privateers failed to reach Denmark. "*When [Murad Reis] tried to attack the Danes, he was driven back by cannon fire*," says Acta Militaria, a blog specializing in the story . *This is a good example of the damage caused by unskilled writers citing fanciful stories as fact.***

During his raids, however, the Grand Admiral of the Republic of Salé captured a large number of slaves and sold them in the Arab slave markets in North Africa. According to Cyril Field, “*it would have been officially reported that there were nearly 1,400 English captives in Sale*”. They were also sent to Algiers to be sold there.

Five years after the arrival of Jan Janszoon aka Murad Reis, **Lundy Island was taken over by a former British pirate, John Penington.** The *Devon Perspectives* site recalls that the latter was charged by the British government to "*put an end once and for all to the threat of pirates*", noting that even if Penington was "*endowed with absolute powers, two pirates were reported on the island de Lundy the following year, and that* ***Algerian pirates made the island their base in 1635*** **".**